



Department of Justice



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2005
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\$100 MILLION SETTLEMENT REACHED FOR CLEANUP OF THE MILLTOWN RESERVOIR

HELENA —The Atlantic Richfield Company and the NorthWestern Corporation have agreed to complete a \$100 million-plus cleanup of the Milltown Reservoir, removing millions of cubic yards of contaminated sediments and decommissioning and removing the Milltown Dam, the Department of Justice and the Environmental Protection Agency announced today. The State of Montana and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are also signatories to the settlement.

This agreement will result in the cleanup of decades' worth of contamination caused by the downstream transport of mining wastes from extensive upstream operations in Butte and Anaconda. It will lead to safer drinking water for Milltown residents, improved native and sport fishing, local economic redevelopment, and improvement of conditions in the Blackfoot and Clark Fork Rivers in southwestern Montana. The agreement follows other settlements with Atlantic Richfield in the Clark Fork Basin under which cleanups will proceed and the state and federal governments' costs will be reimbursed. The parties plan to continue their negotiations in an effort to reach further agreements on the cleanup of other locations in the Clark Fork Basin contaminated by mining wastes.

"We are pleased that Atlantic Richfield and the NorthWestern Corporation have agreed to the cleanup and restoration of the Milltown Reservoir area," said Deputy Assistant Attorney General John C. Cruden for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "Today's settlement follows other important settlements in the Clark Fork Basin and will substantially improve the environment and restore valuable natural resources for the people of Montana. This settlement adds to the momentum created by earlier agreements. We hope today's agreement will keep the parties focused on securing cleanup in the Basin by cooperation rather than litigation and will lead to similar future successes."

Milltown 2-2-2

Under the consent decree, the Atlantic Richfield Company—a subsidiary of British Petroleum—has agreed to remove almost 2.5 million cubic yards of contaminated sediment from Milltown Reservoir. The Milltown Dam spillway and related structures will be removed so that recontamination does not occur and so that the cleanup of polluted ground water at the site will be completed quickly. Following this work, the State of Montana, acting as the lead natural resource damage trustee, will implement a streambank channelization and revegetation effort that will enhance fish habitat and be compatible with redevelopment of the area.

“Today’s agreement is an important milestone that sets the stage for the long-awaited cleanup of this area. I commend all the parties involved on their ability to come to agreement for the greater public and environmental good,” said Robbie Roberts, EPA’s Regional Administrator in Denver, Colorado. “The cleanup that will result from this agreement is a tremendous undertaking and a testimony to the leadership of the State of Montana and Missoula County. We are removing a dam to give new life to these rivers and the local community.”

The settlement also requires that both Atlantic Richfield and NorthWestern provide funds historic preservation; bull trout mitigation; removal of the nearby Stimson Dam, mitigation for a State-owned bridge and highway; reimbursement for past and future federal response and oversight costs related to the Milltown project.

“I salute the excellent work reflected in this settlement,” said United States Attorney William Mercer for the District of Montana. “It illustrates how the public interest is served best in many instances when parties agree to forego litigation and focus instead on building an agreement that significantly improves conditions in our state.”

The EPA anticipates that the remediation and restoration will occur over the next six to seven years. Redevelopment efforts will be spearheaded by the Milltown Redevelopment Working Group, a local community-based organization that has crafted a site reuse plan which has been adopted by the Missoula County Commissioners. Its implementation is scheduled to follow remediation and restoration of the sites.

The agreement will be the subject of a 30-day public comment period beginning with publication of the *Federal Register* notice for the settlement.

During the public comment period, the consent decree may also be examined on the Department of Justice website, at: <http://www.usdoj.gov/enrd/open.html>.

The consent decree and other information related to the Milltown Site are available on the internet at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region8/superfund/sites/mt/milltowncfr/reservoirou.html>.

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Copies of the Consent Decree will also be available for public review at the following locations: Bonner School Library (Bonner, MT), Missoula City-County Library (Missoula, MT), Mansfield Library at the University of Montana Library (Missoula, MT), the Hearst Free Library (Anaconda, MT), and the US EPA Region 8 Montana Office, Federal Building, 10 West 15th St., Suite 3200, Helena, Montana.

Comments should be sent to:

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Refer to U.S. v. Atlantic Richfield Company (D.Mt.), DOJ Case Number 90-11-2-430

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